Curried Meatballs With Eggplant

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* **YIELD**4 servings

INGREDIENTS

* **1 ¼** **cups basmati rice**
* **2** **tablespoons finely minced ginger**
* **1** **teaspoon brown mustard seeds**
* **1** **teaspoon cumin seeds**
* **1** **teaspoon coriander seeds**
* **½ to 1** **teaspoon crushed chile flakes, to taste**
* **4** **tablespoons ghee or vegetable oil**
* **1** **medium onion, finely chopped**
* **1** **medium eggplant, about 1 pound, quartered lengthwise, cut in 1/2-inch slices**
* **1** **pound ground lamb or beef**
* **1** **large egg, lightly beaten**
* **2** **tablespoon minced fresh mint**
* **Salt**
* **1** **poblano chile, seeded and slivered**
* **2** **teaspoons garam masala**
* **2** **medium tomatoes, chopped**

Nutritional Information

PREPARATION

1. Rinse the rice twice, drain, then place in a saucepan and mix in half the ginger. Add 2 cups water, bring to a boil, reduce heat to very low, cover and cook 15 minutes. Set aside, covered. Heat a large sauté pan and add mustard seeds, cumin seeds and coriander seeds. Cook on medium-high until seeds start to dance and smell fragrant. Turn off heat. Remove to a mortar. Add chile flakes and pulverize.
2. Add 1 tablespoon of the ghee or oil to the pan. Add onion and sauté on low until very lightly browned. Remove. Add remaining ghee or oil and sauté eggplant on medium until lightly browned. Remove.
3. Mix ground meat with half the onions, half the ground spices, 6 tablespoons of the rice, the egg, half the mint and salt to taste. Form into 1-inch meatballs. Sauté meatballs in pan on medium until lightly browned. Don’t worry if a few of them break up. Remove. Add poblano, remaining ground spice mixture, garam masala and remaining ginger to pan. Sauté on medium until poblano wilts.
4. Add tomatoes, simmer on low 5 minutes, scrape bottom of pan, add 1 cup water, then return eggplant, remaining onion and meatballs to pan. Cover and simmer 15 minutes. Taste for seasoning, adding more salt and chile if needed. Reheat rice on low. Dust curry with remaining mint and serve with rice.